

SORCERER'S HANDBOOK

Chapter 641: Divine Lord Inheritance

Compared to the naive silver sorcerers and the growing golden sorcerers, the sanctuary sorcerers of the Distant Sky Domain undoubtedly possess a broader perspective.

Whether it was the recent tremor affecting the Virtual Realm or the enormous golden Phantom before them, neither could be the work of a legendary sorcerer. In other words, they were witnessing a divine intervention that would alter the landscape of the Virtual Realm!

At this moment, new Phantoms began to appear one after another, but all the sanctuary sorcerers focused solely on the golden Phantom. Ash and his companions were no exception. As they attempted to fly towards the golden Phantom, despite the seemingly vast distance, they found themselves inside it in an instant.

However, contrary to the Phantom's grand exterior, Ash and the others arrived in a hall of normal size. The interior was quite crude, with walls resembling concrete slabs, less refined than even a cave.

The experienced explorers quickly realized something was amiss-their spirits were unusable, spellforce was prohibited, and the Sanctuary could not be raised!

Attempts to leave the Virtual Realm were equally futile!

Ash and Vesser were relatively unfazed, especially Ash, who was almost accustomed to being sealed. Sonya and Deya, on the other hand, were encountering such a situation for the first time. The fear and helplessness of losing their powers gripped their hearts tightly, making it hard to breathe. Instinctively, they grabbed Ash's hands on either side.

"Don't worry, we're together."

Ash's calm voice soothed their inner turmoil. "Besides, if this really is a death trap, then hundreds or even thousands of sanctuary sorcerers will perish with us. At least we'll die spectacularly."

“At least we’ll die together.”

Sonya exhaled deeply, “I refuse to die with you!”

Deya was so anxious her hair seemed to darken, “Can’t we just not die?”

Vesser glanced at them and stepped back to maintain a social distance, suddenly saying, “Look at your soul.”

Ash and the others examined their souls and discovered that a new spirit was forming. The spirit had only one wing, resembling a sorcerer but was pitch black, like an unformed lump of clay.

Information about this spirit quickly flooded into Ash and his companions’ minds: the ‘Primordial’ spirit!

This was a spirit of the Soul Sect!

Ash and the others were astounded-although the Soul Sect wasn't one of the mysterious spellcasting sects like prophecy, Truth, or fate, very few sorcerers could practice the Soul Sect, as it was not a spellcasting humans could learn!

As mentioned before, each race has its unique spellcasting advantages: the Ogres with the Gluttony Sect and Truth Sect, the orcs with the Spatial Sect, the Bewitchers with the Mental Sect, and while Goblins rarely become sorcerers, once they do, their talents suddenly soar... the Soul Sect is the exclusive spellcasting talent of the Elves!

Moreover, it's not that all Elves can learn the Soul Sect, but only Elves have a chance to awaken the Soul Sect!

Ash had traversed three Kingdoms, and the only sorcerer practicing the Soul Sect was the sanctuary sorcerer Qenna Senhaeser of the Gospel Kingdom!

Perhaps some might think that the Mental Sect and the Soul Sect are the same. However, the Mental Sect delves into thoughts, will, and emotions, while the Soul Sect focuses on the soul itself. To put it in perspective, the Mental Sect studies combat techniques, whereas the Soul Sect examines the body's structure.

Now, with the sudden emergence of the Primordial spirit within their souls, what does this mean? Have their abilities in the Soul Sect suddenly reached the silver realm?

Yet, the Primordial spirit suddenly released a black mist, dyeing their souls black! At the same time, a message flowed into their minds-

“Welcome to the Dreaming Celestium. I am the thirteenth owner here, the Specter Seer. Although the Dreaming Celestium is now shattered, it still serves as a place of Inheritance.”

“Upon entering the Dreaming Celestium, you are considered participants in the Specter’s Ordeal. Within the Celestium, all spirits and spellforce are forbidden, except for the Primordial spirit generated from your souls.”

“Those who pass all the trials may inherit all my Hidden Treasures.”

“Good luck.”

Just as Ash and the others processed this information, the hall filled with swirling smoke, and a dozen fierce-looking Soul Hounds emerged. Clearly, the first challenge of the Specter's Ordeal was to eliminate these hounds!

Sonya, feeling an instinctive understanding, quickly grasped the use of the Primordial spirit, despite it being her first encounter with the Soul Sect. She aimed at a hound and swung from afar, unleashing a brilliant blue soul blade!

Deya, her hair in disarray, clearly had her witch sisters joining the fray. They too understood the Primordial spirit's use, their bodies suddenly draped in a light purple veil, speeding up as they charged into the pack of hounds!

Vesser, however, did not rush in. A green light shot from her fingertips, striking a hound that was about to reach her. The next moment, the hound turned to attack the other hounds!

The same spirit, yet three different effects! The sword Princess's effect was sword energy vibrations, the witches' effect was increased speed, and Vesser's effect was domination over creatures!

This is the marvel of the Primordial spirit-it adapts entirely to the sorcerer's intent. Whatever effect the sorcerer wishes to achieve, the Primordial spirit delivers, making it truly Universal!

However, this power is not without cost. As they eliminated half the hounds, Ash called them back. Both the sword Princess and the witches appeared translucent, with Vesser being the most severe, almost see-through!

The Primordial spirit does not consume spellforce; it consumes the sorcerer's soul!

If a sorcerer indulges in the Primordial spirit's overwhelming power, they risk depleting their soul entirely. At that point, a single bite from a hound would result in complete annihilation, leaving not a trace of the soul to return to the body!

Sonya and the others recognized the gravity of the situation, their expressions serious. "But we can't use any other spirits now, so we must maximize our precision-"

“Actually, there’s no need to worry. You all moved so quickly that I forgot to mention...”

Ash revealed three items: the “Silver Collection: Sword Wing Emblem,” which increases attack speed and consecutive attack power; the “Golden Collection: Stun Hammer,” which briefly stuns enemies with each effective hit; and the “Colorful Collection: Sight of the Lord of Wind, Rain, and Snow,” which slows all enemies within view.

“...It seems these collections can still work here.”

Just as silver sorcerers know that the Golden Fish is a shortcut to smuggle into the Time Continent, golden sorcerers are aware that the Rainbow Tail can lead them to the Distant Sky Domain. Sanctuary sorcerers can simply look up to see the Ruby Mountain of the Distant Land, and naturally, legendary sorcerers know of an even higher shortcut-the Angel at the peak of Ruby Mountain!

Legend has it that atop Ruby Mountain resides an Angel, and finding it would allow a sorcerer to reach the fifth layer of the Virtual Realm, shedding their mortal coil to achieve Immortality as a Demigod.

However, what everyone knows, almost no one can accomplish. A legend remains a legend, as no one has ever reached the summit.

This is because Ruby Mountain is infinitely vast; no matter how much a legendary sorcerer climbs, they can never reach the top. In fact, the more they climb, the further the summit seems to drift away.

There was once a legendary sorcerer who, through various Miracles, restored their soul energy and climbed Ruby Mountain continuously for an entire year, yet still could not reach the summit. When the Miracle's time expired, they collapsed from exhaustion on the mountain.

Despite this, legendary sorcerers are almost unanimous in their belief about the summit: the Angel exists. More than one sorcerer has claimed to see a figure at the very top of Ruby Mountain.

And now, nearly every legendary sorcerer who logs into the Virtual Realm can see that six-winged silhouette atop Ruby Mountain.

It is definitely not an Angel, as even a Demigod Angel has at most Five Wings.

And Six Wings, there is only one kind of existence-

“I see, the Blank Concept was destroyed, so you brought out these secret inheritances to gather the collective will of the sorcerers. Each sorcerer who claims an inheritance can imprint their desires onto the Blank Concept, and ultimately, all these desires will coalesce into a new law...”

A melodious yet clear voice seemed to echo from every corner of Ruby Mountain. The legendary sorcerers listened intently, barely daring to breathe, unsure of whom the six-winged silhouette was addressing.

But the six-winged silhouette soon ended the conversation. It slightly lowered its head, and everyone felt as though it was gazing directly at them, the oppressive pressure nearly bending the spines of the legends.

“I am the remnant will of the Lord of Wishflux, temporarily using Ruby Mountain as a place of Inheritance. Sorcerers who wish to obtain the Inheritance, climb to the summit and seize your ‘heart’s desire.’”

“But my original self died in haste, unable to lay down a complete Inheritance, so there is no spirit treasury, no Spellcasting knowledge, and no deities within the Inheritance.”

“The only thing you can inherit, and only this-“

“Is my Celestium.”

Chapter 642: Specter Handbook

Although the use of spirits and spellforce was prohibited, Ash and his team, with their seamless cooperation and the aid of their collection, effortlessly cleared out the pack of Soul Hounds.

Upon their defeat, the Soul Hounds transformed into a pool of pale blue glimmers. Once all the Soul Hounds were vanquished, these glimmers coalesced into three light orbs of varying sizes. Without needing any explanation, the sorcerers instantly understood what each represented-

The fluffy orb on the left was the Miracle “Soul Restoration,” which replenished the sorcerers’ depleted soul energy. Its size was the smallest, indicating the next challenge would be easy.

The orb in the middle was the two-wings spirit ‘Primordial,’ signifying that if a sorcerer chose this orb, their ‘Primordial’ spirit would directly advance to two-wings. Its size was moderate, suggesting the next challenge would be of average difficulty.

The orb on the right was dazzlingly bright, representing a significant amount of Soul Sect realm experience. Its size was the largest, indicating the next challenge would be difficult!

Ash and his team immediately realized that the style of this Inheritance was a blatant survival of the fittest. Among the three options, the soul experience was undoubtedly the most valuable, yet it carried the greatest risk; if one wanted the least risky option, they could only restore their soul, which was akin to gaining nothing.

Moreover, it was clear that the next challenge would be tougher than the previous one, and merely restoring soul energy without any enhancement in combat strength was a dead end.

However, Ash and his team were still in good condition, so he glanced at the middle and right options, pondered for a moment, and said, “Vesser, you take the reward on the right.”

Vesser was somewhat surprised, “Me?”

“After all, you’re a genius who has mastered over twenty spells and are more likely to enter the Soul Sect,” Ash glanced at the sword Princess and the Witch for their opinions,

and the latter had no objections, “Resources should be allocated to the most suitable person.”

Vesser said no more, approached the right orb, and as she touched it, the other two orbs vanished instantly. Then, eight enormous and fierce Harpies appeared around the hall, attacking together with howling winds, their sharp talons like blades!

Ash and the others hurriedly engaged in battle, and at that moment, Vesser, having dominated one of the Harpies, suddenly said, “I see now, no wonder the Specter’s Inheritance allows us to team up.”

“What?”

“Sixteen Soul Hounds, eight Harpies-this is definitely not the normal setup for the Inheritance Trial. The number of enemies likely increases with the number of participants, but the reward after passing the trial is only for one person. This means that if sorcerers want to team up for the trial, the consumption won’t decrease much, but only one person will get the reward.”

Ash and his team immediately understood-the Specter’s Inheritance doesn’t mind whether they are a team of four sorcerers or a hundred. The difficulty of the trial scales with the number of participants, and regardless of how many pass, only one person ever receives the reward.

Deya was a bit puzzled, “But the Specter Seer designed it this way, it should encourage solo trials. If that’s the case, why not forcibly separate us? Surely he could do that?”

Since even spirits and spellforce can be sealed here, separating them should be no difficult task.

“The exact reason might be elusive, but we can speculate,” Vesser suggested. “From his title ‘Specter Seer,’ it’s clear he’s a sorcerer skilled in both prophecy and soul magic. Rather than direct combat, he likely excels in strategy and collaboration. Perhaps he believes that even under unfavorable conditions, the ability to organize sorcerers to work together is a trait he seeks in a successor.”

As they conversed, they had already dealt with the Harpies, but the cost was that their forms became even more translucent. Without replenishing their soul energy, their Primordial spirits continued to deplete. Even though they had only been in the Virtual Realm for less than an hour, half of their soul energy was already consumed.

Once again, three light orbs appeared: “Soul Restoration,” “Specter Handbook,” and “Leave!”

Yes, “Leave” was also a reward! In the Specter’s Inheritance, Ash and his companions couldn’t return to reality on their own!

“This Specter Seer is likely an Evil Sorcerer,” Sonya suddenly remarked.

Ash and Vesser silently nodded, while Deya was puzzled. “Why? Wouldn’t someone who leaves an inheritance be a Good Sorcerer?”

“If a Good Sorcerer left an inheritance, it wouldn’t endanger a sorcerer’s life. Even if a sorcerer failed the trial, at most, they would suffer some loss,” Sonya explained. “But this Specter’s Inheritance, if you don’t choose ‘Leave’ as a reward, you might die in the trial and not return to reality, with your soul being devoured by monsters! Such disregard for life is a common trait of Evil Sorcerers.”

“The timid are halted, the reckless meet their end, only those with wisdom, courage, and skill can qualify to inherit his legacy through the trials!”

Ash added, “In comparison, although the Dramatic Poet was a bit quirky, his inheritance genuinely aids future generations.”

Compared to the Specter Seer, the Dramatic Poet’s inheritance seemed much more humane. In any of the Dramatic Poet’s inheritances, sorcerers had choices-whether to accept, which to accept, and how to accept. The autonomy was always in the sorcerer’s hands. The Dramatic Poet was like a mischievous older brother; sorcerers might find him exasperating but never fear him.

In contrast, the Specter Seer immediately sealed their spirits and spellforce, using the threat of death to filter out qualified individuals, like a mastermind orchestrating a Battle Royale. The design of the inheritance alone revealed the stark difference in humanity between these two upper-tier sorcerers.

Deya became anxious. “Then let’s leave quickly!”

Among the four, the Witch sisters were probably the most timid-not only because they feared for Ash’s safety but also because she was confident that as long as she followed the steps, reaching legend status was only a matter of time. More importantly, even if she

remained in the Sanctuary her whole life, it wouldn't matter much, as she was still the Empress of the Gospel Kingdom!

"No," Ash pointed at the "Specter Handbook." "You all want to choose that, don't you?"

Sonya and Vesser immediately nodded-if their guess was correct, this might be the Sorcerer's Handbook of the Demigod Angel!

Even if they learned nothing, just glimpsing the secrets and gossip of a demigod sorcerer would be worth it!

However, there was a lingering doubt in their minds. Could such a handbook of a Demigod Angel really be obtained so easily? Could it be a counterfeit?

When Ash chose this reward, they immediately entered the third trial, where eight Blade Fish Dragons appeared. This brought excitement to the Sword Princess, the Witch, and Ash, who greeted the Blade Fish Dragons with smiles.

After dealing with the Blade Fish Dragons, they didn't immediately look at the new rewards but instead gathered to examine the "Specter Handbook." As expected, it wasn't a genuine Sorcerer's Handbook, nor was it a counterfeit; it simply lacked the latter part.

"Specter Handbook"

“I traversed the Path of Origin, reaching the summit of Ruby Mountain, where I encountered the legendary Angel. As the legends say, the Angel wished for me to offer my first half-life to Him-essentially, to write the first half of my Sorcerer’s Handbook.”

“Perhaps He expected me to pen a thrilling account of my early life, but my writing is rather dull, so I can only provide a simple summary.”

“This is actually my second life. In my previous life, I ascended to Sanctuary at the age of 87, and by sheer luck, I obtained the Core Heritage of the Crystal Time Lord. Unfortunately, I was besieged and had to activate the one-time deity ‘Second Cycle,’ beginning my second life.”

“With knowledge of the future, I swiftly gathered all my family’s assets and left before disaster struck, subsequently acquiring the Soul Heritage of the Soulwalker and the Prophecy Heritage of the Seer. Using my past life’s insights, I quickly amassed cultivation resources and preemptively eliminated potential obstacles. Unfortunately, the Crystal Time Lord’s Heritage can only be inherited once across all timelines, so I remain unworthy of the greatest Time Heritage.”

“In virtual realm exploration, many claim that the Path of Origin is now a relic, and sorcerers can only ascend the Virtual Realm by enhancing their Sect Realm. The Path of Origin, paved by Golden Fish, Rainbow Tail, and faded dreams, is no longer what it once was.”

“But I know that the Sea of Knowledge still harbors the last group of Silver Scale Mermen. After slaying them and condensing their scales into the Second Silver Wing, I successfully found the Golden Fish and traversed the Path of Origin to reach the Time Continent.”

“The Rainbow Tail on the Time Continent now only has three colors, with the other four lost, either held by Demigods or Divine Sovereigns. In theory, I cannot gather the Rainbow Tail like the ancient sorcerers to traverse the Path of Origin.”

“However, I know the four colors haven’t vanished; they’ve merely transformed into another form and hidden away, and I know where they’re concealed. After successfully gathering the Seven Colors, I seized the Rainbow Tail and arrived at the Distant Sky Domain.”

“The faded dream is the most challenging. In ancient times, the faded dream required obtaining the ‘Into Dreams’ spirit from the Dreamland, then feeding it with materials like Wound of the Wind, Language of Flowers, Scattering of Snow, and Crystal of the Moon to transform the ‘Into Dreams’ spirit into the ‘faded dream’ spirit, thus embarking on the Path of Origin to reach Ruby Mountain!”

“But now, the Dreamland has become the Nightmare Angel’s exclusive domain, and sanctuary sorcerers cannot enter. More importantly, Wound of the Wind and Language of Flowers are no longer produced; sorcerers can at most find Scattering of Snow and Crystal of the Moon, making it impossible to nurture a faded dream spirit.”

“However, the Four Pillars Cult, with its long history, surely possesses Wound of the Wind and Language of Flowers. Thus, I joined the Four Pillars Cult, found a way to obtain these two materials, successfully nurtured the faded dream spirit, and embarked on the Path of Origin, reaching the summit of Ruby Mountain.”

“This is likely my only chance to stand at the mountain’s peak; from now on, I can only climb from below.”

“Upon seeing my arrival, the Angel was somewhat surprised. He mentioned that no one has traversed the Path of Origin recently. Given His time scale, ‘recently’ probably means within the last century.”

“So I wrote this half-handbook as a gift to Him.”

“To the Angel of Ruby Mountain.”

“-Specter Sorcerer, Dolok Mirahorn.”

Chapter 643: The Faded Dream

The true contents of the Specter Handbook extend far beyond what was initially revealed.

It also details how the Specter Seer absconded with the Family’s wealth, seized the Inheritances of the Soulwalker and the Seer, and eliminated those prodigious talents. However, these are ancient historical accounts, so distant that they hold little relevance now and aren’t worth a deep dive.

Yet, the Specter Seer’s description of the Virtual Realm alone was enough to stir up a storm in the hearts of Ash and his companions!

It turns out that the Golden Fish, Rainbow Tail, and faded dream are collectively known as the Path of Origin!

There used to be a tribe of Silver Scale Mermen in the Sea of Knowledge, and extracting scales from them could condense into a Second Silver Wing! This was the correct way to seek the Golden Fish, unlike Ash and Sonya's hand-in-hand, wing-to-wing approach, which was practically a brute-force method!

The truth about the Rainbow Tail was just as Ash had surmised. In the past, the Time Continent had seven color mechanisms, and sorcerers could simply wander around to collect these colors and catch the Rainbow Tail, without needing to battle through the heroic soul legions of the Six Nations!

However, the mechanism of the faded dream caused a sinking feeling in Ash and the others.

"Wound of the Wind, Language of Flowers, Scattering of Snow, Crystal of the Moon..." Vesser mused over these terms. "Could it be the Ritual of Prohibited Synchronization of Wind, Flower, Snow, and Moon? In ancient times, before the synchronization ritual was formed, were these materials readily available in the Distant Sky Domain?"

"Let's not even mention those materials," Ash said with a wry smile. "The Specter Seer already mentioned that this is Dreamland-and it's a shattered Dreamland at that!"

Sonya remarked, "It's strange. In the Specter Seer's time, Dreamland was still intact. How did it-"

“The Specter Seer was only the thirteenth holder. Between the time he wrote this handbook and when he took over Dreamland, it might have changed hands several times, being battered to the point of collapse,” Vesser analyzed. “If the ‘Into Dreams’ spirit can only be born in Dreamland, then the faded dream might be cut off-unless we can find other Into Dreams spirits.”

“It’s odd. I’ve never heard of an ‘Into Dreams’ spirit,” Deya said. “But if it’s a spirit, we should be able to summon it, right?”

“Not necessarily,” Vesser replied. “In fact, the spirits we sorcerers can summon might not even make up half of what’s out there.”

“Spirits can be divided into two types: those we sorcerers have fully understood, and those we haven’t yet grasped but have observed. We can summon the former, but the latter we can only acquire from the Virtual Realm.”

“For sects like Dream and Soul, we barely understand them, let alone engage with them, so we have to rely on what the Virtual Realm provides. The generation of spirits in the Virtual Realm depends on the environment. For instance, time spirits are mostly found in the Golden Flow, and spatial spirits are often in the Distant Sky Domain... If Dreamland is the only birthplace of dream spirits, then unless the Virtual Realm generates a second birthplace, we won’t be able to obtain an Into Dreams spirit.”

“So,” Ash sighed, “if we want to ascend to legend, we’ll have to rely on you all to study hard and improve every day.”

Deya clenched her fists, her expression one of great responsibility. “Got it!”

However, Sonya was more intrigued by another aspect: “This world actually has a ‘Second Cycle’ deity that lets someone go back and start over? That’s so unfair! Doesn’t that mean they can keep trying until they find a future they like?”

“Most likely, it’s not unlimited,” Vesser explained. “The names of spirits and deities are very precise. Since it’s called ‘Second Cycle,’ it can only allow someone to experience a second cycle. If the Specter Seer wants to reincarnate again for a third cycle, he would need a ‘Third Cycle’ deity. The ‘Second Cycle’ wouldn’t help him.”

“Moreover, it’s not just the Specter Seer who gets a second chance; others do too.”

Sonya pointed out, “But others don’t have memories of the future.”

“Even without future memories, the same person, at the same time, facing the same situation, might make completely different choices,” Vesser chuckled. “For all we know, we might already be in someone’s second cycle, and no one is aware of it.”

Ash’s expression turned serious. “Could someone be planning to eliminate us in advance...”

Sonya playfully tapped his head. “You’re always on the run; don’t sweat the small stuff.”

When Sonya exited the Virtual Realm, Galaxia was still wrapped in the embrace of night.

After passing five trials, their soul energy was too depleted to continue, so they chose to “leave” and exit the Specter’s Inheritance. This Inheritance would likely take months to determine a victor, so there was no need to rush.

It’s worth mentioning that with each trial they passed, they noticed an increase in their spellforce, almost like passing through a dream phantom. Despite the life-threatening risks and the sealing of spellforce and spirits, the rewards from the Specter’s Inheritance far exceeded those of a dream phantom.

Even Sonya vaguely sensed that the Specter’s Inheritance would bring significant changes to societies across nations. All sanctuary sorcerers would partake in this grand event, and their deaths and gains would become the winds driving the era forward.

Fortunately, this Inheritance appeared in the Distant Sky Domain; otherwise, they wouldn’t have had the chance. Other levels of sorcerers were truly unfortunate to miss such an opportunity...

As Sonya mused over these thoughts, she headed towards the ‘Harvest Orchard,’ intending to trade spirits.

But she soon noticed that, despite the early hour, many students were rushing to the Harvest Orchard, eager not to be a step behind. What was going on-was there a discount on spirits today?

Arriving at the orchard's entrance, she found it packed with students, the noise reminiscent of a bustling market. Even Engulite was there. Sonya squeezed through the crowd and tapped Engulite on the shoulder, curiously asking, "What's going on here?"

"Renting water spell spirits," Engulite replied, her sword bag slung over her shoulder.

"Renting?"

"Yes, I'm just trying to catch a ride on the Whirlpool. I haven't studied the Water Sect, so it's nearly impossible for me to pass the Lake Angel's trial."

"Lake Angel?"

Engulite organized her thoughts and explained seriously, "The Sea of Knowledge has revealed a Lake Angel Inheritance Trial, but it's restricted to water sorcerers. As long as you have a water spell spirit, you can trigger a Whirlpool and directly reach the trial site."

Sonya felt a bit dazed as she left the Harvest Orchard, watching more and more students rushing over. Suddenly, she realized something important-the number of silver sorcerers is undoubtedly the highest and most widespread. So, even though the Specter Seer's Inheritance is of higher quality than the Lake Angel's, its influence is definitely not as significant.

The design of the Lake Angel's Inheritance clearly reflects the work of a Good Sorcerer, likely benefiting water sorcerers greatly. This means that the strength of water sorcerers

will generally rise, enhancing their reputation and influence, and new apprentices will be more inclined towards the Water Sect.

In Galaxia, the university known for its advantage in water spells is... Swordflower College!

Sonya could almost picture it-the impact of the Lake Angel Inheritance would cause Swordflower College's student quality to soar in the coming years. The college, currently at the tail end of the top tier, might seize this opportunity to climb to the forefront, perhaps even rivaling Truth College!

Swordflower College is going to win effortlessly!

Sonya mused as she found Professor Trozan in the school office. The first thing Professor Trozan asked was, "Did you hear about the Divine Lord Inheritance appearing on Ruby Mountain?"

Then the second question: "Do you know that each sorcerer who wins the Inheritance has the chance to imprint their ideas onto the Blank Concept, forming new laws?"

Sonya asked, "Blank Concept?"

After understanding the meaning of Blank Concept, Sonya pondered for a moment and asked, "Any idea can be imprinted? What if it's something on the level of divine intervention?"

“Like what?”

“Like... resurrection?”

Trozan replied, “Isn’t the Necromancy Sect all about resurrection?”

Sonya was taken aback, “Are you saying the Necromancy Sect is a created concept?”

“Who knows?” Trozan shrugged. “But if the Blank Concept truly forms new concepts based on your ideas, it would likely be a law that ordinary sorcerers could utilize... Do you have something in mind?”

Sonya almost blurted it out but remembered Ash’s advice and held back, “No, just chatting.”

But she had already made up her mind-she must seize the Inheritance and then-

Create a concept that allows time travel across Kingdoms!

Chapter 644: Inheritance Discussions

In the heart of Black Robe Town, within the largest Foxlamp Ice Room, the air buzzed with lively chatter and spirited debates.

“Yesterday, three Ordinary Inheritances were claimed in the Eternal City. I wonder which lucky ones got them...”

“Those are just Ordinary Inheritances. Above them are the Golden Flow Inheritance and the Unmatched Inheritance!”

“The Golden Flow and Unmatched Inheritances are meant for true prodigies. Perhaps those whose spellcasting realms have surpassed the golden level to reach the Sanctuary, the two-wings sorcerers, are all lingering on the Time Continent, vying for the position of King of Time. I’m not arrogant enough to compete with them... If I could just secure one Ordinary Inheritance out of thousands, manage a resource point for a year, I’d be more than satisfied.”

At that moment, the mature woman at the counter, as ripe as a peach, suddenly rang a golden bell. Once she had everyone's attention, she leisurely took out an ink pen and wrote a piece of intelligence on the whiteboard behind her:

"96: In the Specter's Inheritance, every twenty levels guarantee a 'specter key.' The key can be used three times, allowing you to exit the Inheritance at any moment."

After writing, the woman announced, "Table 13, your meal is on the house!"

Instantly, the glamorous girls in the Ice Room turned their attention to the six people at Table 13: the most noticeable being the entirely black-clad Raven, followed by the tall, masked orc. The other four were relatively normal—an aloof blonde girl with glasses, a quiet blue-haired girl, a red-haired girl eating Lala Fatty, and a curly-haired, dark-skinned girl with shackles on her wrists.

The crowd nodded respectfully towards them, silently expressing their gratitude.

After all, those who could provide clues about the Specter's Inheritance were only the sanctuary sorcerers. Even though Black Robe Town was teeming with sorcerers, sanctuary sorcerers were still a rare sight, as evidenced by the

shared board-out of 96 shared pieces of intelligence, less than ten concerned the Specter's Inheritance.

However, the crowd soon returned to discussing the Lake Inheritance and the Eternal City. The red-haired girl signaled for another serving of Red Flame Lala Fatty, while the dark-skinned girl asked, "Since it's on the house, can we have Alice join us for a meal?"

"We can, but what will Alice eat?"

"There should be a pile of cockroaches here, right? At the very least, there must be some rats?"

"If you keep talking like that, the manager might pay you to dine at the canteen next door."

The group enjoying the free meal was, of course, Ash and his companions.

After leaving the Dead City, Ash had been evading the Four Pillars Cult while seeking the gray fox heritage. Their two teammates picked up in the Dead

City, the orc Chikara and the Star sorcerer Gwen, had temporarily joined their group.

Logically, having Chikara bound by a slave Pact made sense, as he was a sanctuary-level combatant, useful for covering their retreat in danger. But Gwen, with her average combat skills and history as a vessel for the Mercury Trojan Horse, was a different story. Keeping her, a potential ticking time bomb, seemed like Ash and his team were deliberately upping the ante on their adventure's difficulty.

Gwen had used the "Sanctuary: Chrono Hourglass," which cleared the mercury from her system, ensuring she wouldn't turn into a trojan horse again. Moreover, having held a high position within the Four Pillars Cult, she possessed valuable intelligence, making her an asset to Ash's group of adventurers, who were in dire need of resources.

More importantly, Gwen was unwilling to leave and continued to follow them from a distance.

Not wanting to kill her nor leave her unattended, Ash asked Igor to keep an eye on her. If she attempted to leak information or showed any suspicious behavior, Igor was to eliminate her immediately. Igor begrudgingly took on the role of managing this new assistant.

However, having Gwen as a “spy” proved beneficial, allowing them to evade several attacks from the Four Pillars Cult and even raid a few of their secret vaults. This ensured they wouldn’t have to worry about feeding their spirits for a while—three-winged spirits required more gold coins than two-winged ones, and after upgrading their spirits to the three-wing level, each spirit needed three gold coins daily.

Even in the wasteland where prices were high, three gold coins could cover a month’s food expenses for an average person!

Fortunately, the four-winged spirit, Round Cicada, could be sustained with Golden Flow Water, sparing Ash from financial ruin.

They arrived at the Qinyi Alliance in search of heritage clues, but the wasteland’s situation deteriorated rapidly. Despite adopting the “Traveler” identity, they were constantly monitored and even expelled, nearly clashing with the Bronze Law Cult.

Six days ago, a dramatic shift in the Virtual Realm prompted Ash and his companions to seek stability and gather intelligence, leading them back to

Black Robe Town-amidst the holy war fervor, only trade towns tolerated “non-believers” like them.

Upon returning to Black Robe Town, they found the transient population had doubled. Previously, each could have their own room, but now the six of them had to share three rooms. However, since everyone transformed into beautiful maidens at night, it wasn't much of an issue.

The sudden influx of visitors to Black Robe Town was primarily due to the Four Pillars Cult's destruction of the War Temple, which nominally governed Black Robe Town.

As the War Temple's forces crumbled, several cults quickly moved into Black Robe Town, both to protect and to vie for control of this trade hub.

The secondary reason was the emergence of Inheritances within the Virtual Realm, sparking a surge in sorcerers' desire for communication.

Unlike Blood Moon and Gospel, Senlo Kingdom lacked any online communication channels, restricting exchanges to within cults. In normal

times, this wasn't a problem, as they had little to discuss with outsiders, and different cults practiced distinct spellcasting methods, limiting interaction.

But now, things were different. The Lake Inheritance from the Sea of Knowledge and the Eternal City on the Time Continent had become global hot topics. Sorcerers were eager to discuss and analyze gains and losses with others to advance further in the Inheritances.

Consequently, Senlo sorcerers gathered at trade centers, actively seeking intelligence exchanges.

The Foxlamp Ice Room was originally just a canteen, but since Senlo sorcerers frequently gathered there for discussions, the manager had a stroke of genius and introduced a "provide Inheritance intelligence for a free meal" policy. All the intelligence shared was written on the whiteboard behind her, visible to everyone, turning the place into the intelligence exchange hub of Black Robe Town.

Some might wonder why sorcerers would openly discuss confidential intelligence about Angelic Heritage instead of keeping it secret. However, intelligence comes in many forms. Those "premium intelligence" pieces that give one an edge are naturally kept under wraps; yet there are many "curious

anecdotes” that don’t offer any advantage but are worth discussing. These are the main topics in the Ice Room.

Moreover, don’t underestimate the sorcerers’ desire to express themselves. Every sorcerer has undoubtedly received some legacy from predecessors in the Virtual Realm, making them naturally inclined to share. Additionally, sorcerers, who constantly need new knowledge, must regularly output to maintain their mental health. Just like eating leads to digestion, watching a captivating film inspires one to write a review, or finishing a good book prompts one to leave comments-seeking emotional resonance is a biological instinct, and seeking intellectual exchange is a sorcerer’s nature.

Ash provided the intelligence about the Specter’s Inheritance because he had heard and seen many intriguing pieces of intelligence there, so he returned the favor to the community, saving some money in the process.

Just as Ash received the Specter Handbook, the Lake Inheritance and Eternal City revealed the Lake Handbook and Time Handbook as rewards. This might suggest that leaving behind a sorcerer’s handbook is a tradition of Angelic Heritage, further implying that the Lake Angel and King of Time both embarked on the Path of Origin to ascend the Virtual Realm, thus encountering the Angel of Ruby Mountain and creating sorcerer handbooks in their lifetimes!

While one Angel might be a coincidence, the fact that three Angels took the Path of Origin naturally leads sorcerers to wonder: in the distant past, was taking the Path of Origin the most profitable high-level upgrade method? Could the modern method of advancing through Sect Realm actually be a lower-yield, inferior upgrade method?

The contents of the Lake Handbook and Time Handbook gradually validated the sorcerers' thoughts. Notably, the era of the Lake Angel seems to be the most ancient, followed by the King of Time, while the Specter Seer is the closest to the modern era.

When the Lake Angel was still a silver sorcerer, the Sea of Knowledge housed the shallow sea Kingdom formed by Silver Scale Mermen, where the "Silver Wing Test" special mechanism existed. Sorcerers who passed the test could obtain the Second Silver Wing, allowing them to find the Golden Fish and reach the Time Continent.

The pass rate for the Silver Wing Test was one in ten thousand, achievable only by genius sorcerers, which made the Lake Angel quite proud of passing it. From the text, it seems that the relationship between sorcerers and Silver Scale Mermen was relatively harmonious at that time.

However, by the era of the King of Time, the Sea of Knowledge had become a war zone between sorcerers and Silver Scale Mermen. Thus, the only way to find the Golden Fish was to kill enough Silver Scale Mermen, strip their scales, and forge one's Second Silver Wing!

The Silver Scale Mermen generally possess combat abilities equivalent to a One-Winged Sorcerer, with some even reaching the level of a Two-Wings Sorcerer. They typically gather in impulsive groups, making them challenging to hunt.

By the era of the Specter Seer, only a small group of Silver Scale Mermen remained, and they were ultimately wiped out by the Specter Seer, rendering the Second Silver Wing a thing of the past.

Regarding the Time Continent, the Specter Seer's understanding was not vastly different from the present, except for the documentation of two additional color mechanisms.

However, the descriptions by the Lake Angel and the King of Time completely overturned the modern sorcerers' worldview-there was indeed a Kingdom on the Time Continent in the past!

Back then, the Time Continent was not known as such but was called the 'Concept Continent.' The native inhabitants of the Concept Continent referred to themselves as 'Concept Sprites' or 'Spirits of the Law,' while sorcerers called them-Elves!

These beings were natural sorcerers, capable of managing the Golden Flow, commanding virtual realm creatures, and exploiting the continent's resources. Despite their sparse numbers, they developed a magnificent sorcerer civilization!

The resource points on the Time Continent that are still operational today are relics from that era!

Clearly, the Ancient Sprites of the distant past and the Elves of today are different species. To distinguish them, sorcerers refer to them as Ancient Sprites.

In the Lake Angel's era, sorcerers and Ancient Sprites frequently clashed, even leading to the 'Sky Turmoil,' where Ancient Sprite sorcerers rode dragons to hunt sorcerers of other races, causing widespread discontent and intense conflict among humans and other sorcerers.

At that time, sorcerers were at a disadvantage against the Ancient Sprites. After all, sorcerers of other races on the Time Continent were typically Two-Wings, while Ancient Sprites, due to their originals being on the Time Continent, could remain even after reaching the Sanctuary Legend level!

It is easy to imagine how difficult it was for sorcerers of other races during the 'Sky Turmoil.' They not only faced groups of Ancient Sprite sorcerers but also had to contend with Sanctuary Legends far beyond their capabilities! It was like children being beaten by adults!

The Lake Angel specifically recorded being hunted by an Ancient Sprite Sanctuary!

Reading the Lake Handbook and then the Time Handbook brings a sense of irony.

Because the King of Time was an Ancient Sprite!

But in the King of Time's era, the Ancient Sprite Kingdom had already significantly declined, with most of their outer cities lost, leaving them to defend the Eternal City of 'Unfading Twilight.'

In the Time Handbook, he explicitly pointed out the reasons for the Ancient Sprites' decline-Divine Sovereigns like the Blood Moon and Stars used despicable means to eliminate the upper-tier Ancient Sprites, continuously suppressing the Ancient Sprite Kingdom!

As for the description of the Rainbow Tail, both the Lake Angel and the King of Time were almost identical: finding the seven colors allowed one to capture the Rainbow Tail, indicating that in their time, these seven colors were still discoverable.

By the time of the Specter Seer, only three colors remained.

In modern times, only the Golden Flow is left.

Regarding the Distant Sky Domain and faded dream, in the Lake Angel's era, Dreamland was freely accessible, and the four materials of Wind, Flower, Snow, and Moon could be found;

In the King of Time's era, the material 'Wound of the Wind' was already missing, but it could be substituted through a Miracle;

In the Specter Seer's era, not only could missing materials not be substituted, but Dreamland was also occupied by the Nightmare Angel.

In modern times, not only are the four materials absent, but Dreamland itself has shattered.

Considering everything, although all three Angels embarked on the Path of Origin to reach Ruby Mountain, the Lake Angel had a clear purpose throughout her journey. Despite numerous challenges, she never wavered. The King of Time faced much greater difficulty, having to fill in many gaps himself. As for the Specter Seer, by his time, the Path of Origin was theoretically severed. If he hadn't been a "Second Cycle sorcerer," he might not have been able to tread that path at all.

Comparing the contents of these three Angel handbooks, the sense of time's passage practically leaps off the pages.

Yet, among the Inheritances of the Eternal City, Lake Inheritance, and Specter's Inheritance, the most valuable isn't the Specter's Inheritance from the Distant Sky Domain, nor is it the oldest Lake Inheritance.

It's the Inheritance of the Eternal City!

Because while Lake and Specter Inheritances are merely the legacies of individual Angels, the Eternal City represents the heritage of an entire civilization!

The Eternal City contains countless Ordinary Inheritances. If a sorcerer can obtain even one, they gain access to a resource point on the Time Continent for a year. As long as the sorcerer remains in the Virtual Realm, they can receive resources produced there at any time!

For a two-wings sorcerer, this is already a considerable fortune, not to mention the rewards within the Ordinary Inheritances. And the most coveted

prize is the chance to become the successor to the King of Time, effectively becoming the master of the Eternal City!

That is the heritage of the Ancient Sprites, the Eternal City acknowledged by the Virtual Realm!

The value within is simply unimaginable-even the most wildly greedy sorcerer never dreamed of carving out a domain in the Virtual Realm!

Ash heard from the sword Princess that the two-wings sorcerers on the Stars' side were practically going mad with study and research. The Royal Family of Stars even offered a real-world reward for the King of Time's Inheritance: a Duke's seat!

After all, inheriting the Lake Inheritance or the Specter's Inheritance benefits only the individual. But becoming the lord of the Eternal City allows one to shelter other two-wings sorcerers in the Virtual Realm, enhancing the Kingdom's overall foundation!

However, compared to seizing an Inheritance, more sorcerers lament the loss of the Path of Origin, wistfully wishing they could return to ancient times to easily reach Ruby Mountain and so on.

Chikara, for instance, has been complaining for days, lamenting how past sorcerers weren't environmentally conscious enough, leaving nothing but scraps for future generations, forcing everyone to strive and compete...

Only Ash has a vague understanding that the risks of walking the Path of Origin likely far exceed those of normal realm advancement.

Because of the secret toxin!

Embarking on the Path of Origin means being exposed to various secret toxins along the way!

In the Lake Angel's era, even if the success rate of the Silver Scales trial and Seven Colors collection was only one in ten thousand, the accumulated number of successful attempts over time must have been in the hundreds, undoubtedly transforming the secret toxin into a potent poison!

At first, Ash thought there were no secret toxins in the past, but upon closer inspection, the true nature of the Golden Fish, Rainbow Tail, and faded dream wasn't detailed in any of the three handbooks. Clearly, the Angels deliberately withheld this information, only describing the specific processes while leaving the outcomes vague.

These Angels were evidently no fools; the only fool here seems to be Ash himself. There must be effects of the secret toxin he still doesn't understand, which is why the Angels continued to pursue the Path of Origin.

And precisely because they didn't document the outcomes, Ash still can't discern the truth behind the faded dream.

Most sorcerers generally believe that the 'Golden Fish' and 'Rainbow Tail' refer to specific entities. However, only someone like Ash, who has traversed the Path of Origin, understands that these are metaphors. The Golden Fish refers to the shimmering scales of the golden ocean in the sky, while the Rainbow Tail describes the spectacle formed by six colors converging in the Golden Flow.

So, what is the faded dream a metaphor for?

“Of course, there’s no intelligence on the Blank Concept...” Igor muttered.

“It would be strange if there were. So far, only the Lord of Wishflux has mentioned the Blank Concept, and that was in the Divine Lord Inheritance at Ruby Mountain,” Ash said with an air of inevitability. “Senlo has only three legendary sorcerers. If there were intelligence on the Blank Concept here, it would mean those three left the front lines just to come to this Ice Room for the signature Lala Fatty-how unlikely is that!”

“Who suggested we come here to gather concept intelligence?” Igor gritted his teeth, almost raising a hand to knock some sense into Ash, but seeing Ash’s cute red-haired girl appearance, he reluctantly lowered his hand.

“The Four Pillars Cult has ceased its offensive and is actively pulling back its defenses,” Gwen said, setting down the reports she had gathered from various channels that evening. “The front lines are in a standoff.”

“That’s normal. Right now, every sorcerer’s primary target is the Angelic Heritage. Even the War of Faith has to take a backseat,” Igor tapped his finger

on the table. “Who would have thought a war could be forcibly halted for such a reason?”

The Senlo wasteland is undoubtedly the area most affected by the Angelic Heritage-while in other Kingdoms, it might just spark social debate, in Senlo, it can suppress social unrest!

But upon reflection, it’s not surprising. No matter your Kingdom, faith, or race, as long as you can access the Virtual Realm, you have the right to challenge the Angelic Heritage.

Even if the Mercury Trojan Horse and the Qinyi Alliance ignore the sorcerers’ strong desire for the Angelic Heritage and demand they continue fighting, wouldn’t they just touch fish, avoid battles, and conserve their energy during the day to prepare for the nighttime inheritance challenges?

Unless they can prevent sorcerers from accessing the Virtual Realm, no real-world cage, no matter how tight, can imprison a sorcerer whose heart yearns for something more.

Ash asked, “By the way, how far have you all progressed?”

Igor: "We just cleared the fifteenth level last night."

Harvey: "Still on the twelfth level."

"I only played on the first day; I haven't gone back since," Chikara scratched his head.

"Why not?" Everyone was surprised. "This is the Angelic Heritage."

"But I'm neither interested in nor talented for the Soul Sect or the Prophecy Sect," Chikara shrugged. "My rainbow wing is fully formed, and there's little gain for me in the Specter's Inheritance. I'd rather continue exploring the Phantom."

"Maybe the Virtual Realm has a special favor for honest folks like me. Last night, I stumbled upon an affix bubble and got a super rare spirit!" said the orc from the Sanctuary, who was adept at looting and causing mayhem.

Igor was surprised, “Really? That lucky? I’m so jealous of you.”

Chikara proudly patted his chest, “It’s not luck; it’s the inevitable result of my years of diligent training!”

“Then during the day, give me that super rare spirit.”

“What? Why should I! That’s my stuff!”

“Did you forget you’re our slave now?” Igor said mercilessly.

“Nooo-“

Ash watched the orc cling to Igor, whining and pleading, thinking that coming to Black Robe Town was worth it. Otherwise, it would have been hard to witness such a scene...

Ash and the others silently raised their estimation of Chikara by a notch.

For Chikara to become a sanctuary sorcerer, he certainly couldn't be a fool. He realized that the Angelic Heritage wouldn't benefit him and decisively abandoned this once-in-a-millennium opportunity. This level of restraint and decisiveness far surpassed other sanctuary sorcerers.

In fact, from his ability to surrender without hesitation in the Dead City, it was clear that he wouldn't be swayed by honor, greed, or luck. He approached everything based on his own needs, executing when necessary and discarding when not, never wavering or hesitating.

It's hard to predict the future of someone like Chikara. Perhaps his decisiveness will propel him to great heights, or perhaps his shortsightedness will lead to his downfall. But one thing is certain-

He is enviable.

Never doubting himself, never regretting his choices, never blaming himself for anything, but rather pointing fingers at others... Living like Chikara would make life much happier.

“Compared to the Blank Concept, I’m more interested in the rewards from the Divine Lord Inheritance,” Harvey said, holding a fry between his fingers as if simulating smoking. “A Celestium... Does obtaining a Celestium mean a sorcerer can become a Divine Sovereign?”

“If a two-wings sorcerer possesses a Sanctuary, would they then become a sanctuary sorcerer?” Ash countered. “Though it might not be a direct comparison, I doubt the Virtual Realm would allow sorcerers to exploit such loopholes. However, if one could obtain a Celestium and the Divine Lord Inheritance, it would certainly make surpassing human limits easier.”

“But the Celestium left behind by the Lord of Wishflux after his death...” He mused, “So even a Divine Sovereign can die...?”

Igor was startled, carefully observing Ash to ensure he wasn’t maliciously connecting this to other matters, and then relaxed, quickly changing the subject. “Ash, is there anything else you want to eat?”

“Let me see...”

Ash glanced at the menu and suddenly noticed that the milk tea in front of Raven hadn't been touched. Upon closer inspection, Raven hadn't even removed his Mask, and considering that the ongoing discussion was about the Virtual Realm, which Raven was completely unfamiliar with, Ash felt a slight stir in his heart.

He put down the menu and said, “I'm tired of the food here. I'm going outside to get some other snacks. Tamashi, come help me carry things.”

Raven was momentarily surprised but then stood up to follow him. Igor watched their backs, shook his head, and used his foot to push Chikara's face away.

Chapter 645: Good, But Not As Good As Me

“Two ice cream cones, please!”

“And two Lala Fatty skewers.”

After buying a heap of street snacks, Ash remarked, “It’s been eight months since the war broke out, yet Black Robe Town seems untouched by it all.”

“People are just used to it,” Raven replied, carrying the bags of snacks. “Tanomoo once said that in the wasteland, you can count the days without war on one hand.”

“Let’s not go back just yet. Let’s eat here.”

Ash suddenly ducked into a shadowy alley corner. Raven shook his head, “I’m not eating.”

“I’ll lean against this wall, and you against that one. Even if you take off your Mask, I won’t see you,” Ash pointed to the two perpendicular walls in the corner. “I can hear your stomach growling.”

“Impossible. I can go three days without food or water and not have any physical reactions.”

“Are you eating or not? If not, I won’t bring you out next time. You always just watch us eat, making it seem like we’re excluding you.” Ash pressed against one wall, offering the ice cream cone to the unseen side. “This is when you should be tearfully grateful for my kindness.”

“Sorry, I’ve never been trained to cry on command.”

Despite his words, Raven took the food, removed his Mask against the wall, and silently began to eat in small bites.

“How is it? Tasty?”

“Good, but not as good as me.”

Ash was shocked, “Not as good as you? You can cook?”

“Yeah,” Raven said. “I’m the best cook in Raven Annihilation. Every time I return to the cult, everyone waits for me to cook.”

“So you’re good at everything except Spellcasting,” Ash teased. “Why don’t you cook more often?”

“No opportunity, and no need. We’ve been roughing it out, and canned food is already a luxury.”

“But I’m curious about your cooking skills! The ruthless Raven can also make a meal?”

“If there’s a chance, I can cook for you all.”

“It’s a deal then!”

Ash licked the ice cream on his cone and asked, “So, Tamashi, when do you plan to leave?”

“...Huh?”

“We’ve given up on hunting Silver Lantern and don’t want to get entangled with Mercury Trojan Horse. We’re focused on finding a way out of Senlo,” Ash explained. “Our path no longer aligns with yours. So I thought, we shouldn’t hold you back...”

Before he could finish, there was a thud-the sound of an ice cream cone hitting the ground.

“...Are you abandoning me?”

Ash paused, then burst into laughter. Without turning around, he playfully smacked Raven on the head. “Is the Mirage Prism effect that strong? Are you being influenced by hormones? How could you say something so weak?”

“And I wasn’t finished,” he continued. “I was actually worried you might hesitate to leave because of us. I don’t want to waste your time. But if you have no such concerns and want to walk the same path as us...”

“Tamashi, do you want to leave Senlo with us?”

Outside the alley, the noise was overwhelming, with crowds bustling about. The lively sounds of the night market filled every corner of the town, as if it weren't part of the wasteland, as if there were no war raging outside.

“...Mercury Trojan Horse.”

Raven didn't respond directly; he simply mentioned a name.

“Yeah, you still want revenge against Mercury Trojan Horse,” Ash sighed. “I can't tell you to 'let go of hatred'-that's just nonsense. Even though Mercury Trojan Horse is far stronger than you now, and she can afford countless mistakes while you can't afford even one; even though the Four Pillars Cult is on the verge of unifying Senlo, making your chances of revenge even slimmer; even though...”

He paused. “You surely understand those insurmountable reasons better than I do, those impossible obstacles more clearly than I do, yet you still insist on revenge. Who am I to dissuade you? It's just...”

Ash hesitated for a long time without saying anything useful, finally letting out a long sigh. “Sorry, Tamashi.”

Raven seemed surprised. “Why apologize?”

“You’ve helped me so much, yet I can’t help you with your revenge,” Ash said softly. “I have people I want to see, and I can’t waste my life in Senlo.”

“You don’t need to apologize,” Raven replied. “I never expected anything from you.”

“But you’re still willing to help me leave Senlo?”

“Yes.”

Ash was silent for a while, then suddenly had a flash of insight. “Right! As soon as I leave Senlo, Silver Lantern will automatically become the Tactile Sense, and Mercury Trojan Horse will revert to being a mortal. Your chance for revenge will come!”

Raven was taken aback, then nodded. “Yes.”

“So you can’t possibly leave Senlo with us,” Ash said. “But that means I need to think about how to settle you. You definitely wouldn’t want to join another cult, and you can’t rebuild the Raven Annihilation Cult. So I’ll have to find you some allies...”

“You don’t need to worry about me,” Raven said. “I can survive alone.”

“Tamashi, have you forgotten you’re illiterate?”

“Ash, have you forgotten that before I met you all, I was wandering alone, assassinating Mercury Trojan Horse alone, facing the Four Pillars Cult alone?”

“So do you prefer living alone like before, or living with us?”

Seeing Raven’s silence, Ash smiled. “Even tools need maintenance. You’re actually not very good at taking care of yourself. If you keep living the way you did before, you’ll break down sooner or later.”

“...I won’t.”

“In any case, before I leave, I’ll figure out how to settle you, as a way to repay you,” Ash said. “After wandering through most of Senlo, is there any place you fancy? Where would you like to live? Or would you prefer going back to the old Raven Annihilation Cult?”

“By the way, what type of girls do you like? Come to think of it, I should solve your life problems before I leave, so at least you’ll have a companion to care for you. When you succeed in your revenge, you won’t feel empty...”

Seeing Ash's thoughts scatter further and further, Raven had to repeat, "You really don't need to worry about me!"

"But-"

"I actually haven't decided yet."

Ash was taken aback. "Haven't decided?"

"Haven't decided," Raven said. "I have reasons I must stay, but..."

"I also don't reject the idea of leaving."

Ash blinked and chuckled. "Then take your time to think about it; there's no rush. Actually, we haven't made any progress on leaving Senlo, so maybe by the time we do, Mercury Trojan Horse will already be dead."

"Then you can join us without any worries, and continue your adventures in other kingdoms," Ash patted Raven's shoulder. "If you want more people to follow your path, let the fame of Raven Annihilation spread across the six kingdoms!"

"...Alright."

“Okay, let’s head back. If we don’t, Igor will start yelling.”

As they stepped into the light of the street, Raven glanced at Ash, with his red hair and eyes. Perhaps it was the openness they’d just shared that made him unable to suppress his curiosity any longer. “Ash, why does your appearance under the influence of the Mirage Prism look nothing like your original self?”

Though others had also changed significantly, Igor’s blonde hair, Harvey’s dark skin, Chikara’s orc features, and Gwen’s blue hair all remained distinct. Only Ash’s hair color, skin tone, and everything else were completely different, transforming him into another person entirely.

“Huh?” Ash blinked, hesitated for a moment, then said, “I’ll let you in on a secret, but you mustn’t tell anyone, especially not Igor and the others.”

“You remember, my love life is a bit chaotic, right?”

Raven blinked, “Could it be…”

“Exactly!” The Cult Leader took two steps back, spun around, and smiled brightly. “I don’t know why, but the Mirage Prism always changes my appearance to that of the girl I like. Tamashi, you’re the first to see her; even Igor and the others only know about her but haven’t seen her!”

“So, what do you think? Is she pretty?”

After waiting a moment without a response from Raven, Ash pouted, “Alright, alright, I didn’t expect much from your Raven Annihilation aesthetic anyway. Let’s just... wait, that smells amazing. I’m going to grab some for a midnight snack.”

As Ash went over to buy some street food, Raven watched his retreating figure and softly murmured:

“Very good.”

Chapter 646: Sleep in Overcoats

Distant Sky Domain, the shattered Dreamland, Level 34.

“Stick close to me.”

As soon as Ash spoke, Sonya, Deya, and even Vesser pressed tightly against him. The Underground Hall was devoid of any monsters, with only wisps of faint purple smoke emerging from various corners, slowly drifting towards them.

Yet, it was this purple smoke that had stalled Ash and his companions for three days!

Three days ago, they had charged through to Level 34 with unstoppable momentum, thanks to their seamless cooperation and the fact that “Aurora’s Dream Treasure House” acknowledged the Specter’s Inheritance for passing levels!

By passing five levels in the Specter’s Inheritance, they could reliably draw an auxiliary collection!

This was far simpler than exploring dream phantoms, which varied in difficulty. Completing five phantoms typically took 100 minutes, and Ash’s group could explore 13 phantoms in a night, yielding only two collections.

However, the first five levels of the Specter’s Inheritance were generally less challenging. As Ash and his team became more familiar with the Soul Sect and adept at using Primordial spirits, they breezed through the first 20 levels, securing at least four additional collections!

Collections could bypass the Inheritance’s restrictions and aid them in progressing further! Occasionally, they’d draw powerful Colorful Collections like “Night Comet” (which unleashed a comet riptide upon impact), allowing them to clear earlier levels without expending resources.

Despite the advantages of collections, some levels couldn’t be overcome with brute force alone, such as the Inheritance Trial of Level 34, “Soul’s Obsession.”

The first time they encountered this challenge, they were utterly defenseless, trapped in a prolonged dream, their souls gradually eroded. If not for Vesser's soul reaching the silver realm and awakening just before death to use the 'specter key' to escape the Inheritance, they would have all perished there!

Even sanctuary sorcerers were powerless against the Angelic Heritage, dying without even realizing what had happened!

Ash and his companions were deeply shaken, and the situation was compounded by their inability to discern how to overcome this trial. Just as they were about to be permanently stuck, Vesser found a breakthrough in the Specter Handbook.

Previously mentioned, the Specter Handbook contained numerous records, most of which were irrelevant to modern sorcerers, often glanced at and forgotten. Among these were chapters documenting battles when the Specter Seer was still a sorcerer.

Vesser discovered that the Specter Seer had once used a soul miracle called "Soul's Obsession," whose description and effects closely resembled the Level 34 trial, revealing what had nearly killed them.

However, the "Soul's Obsession" recorded in the Specter Handbook was merely a sanctuary miracle that induced sleep, powerful yet lacking the soul-eroding effect. Thus, the Level 34 Soul's Obsession was likely an enhanced version, possibly strengthened further after the Specter Seer ascended to a Demigod Angel, becoming a divine intervention!

"Soul's Obsession" was not something that could be resisted by sheer force. The solution, however, lay within the pages of the Specter Handbook. The Specter Seer had written that

this Miracle could even corrode a Sanctuary, leaving most sorcerers utterly defenseless. It invaded through sight, sound, smell, and touch, and by the time a sorcerer noticed the faint purple smoke, their soul was already ensnared.

Yet, a sorcerer with a soul that was dense and solid could remain unaffected. No matter how the Soul's Obsession tried to entangle them, their soul would stand firm!

The method to fortify one's soul was found within the Specter's Inheritance itself!

The Specter's Inheritance offered two regular rewards: "Soul Experience" and "Temporary Spirit."

Indeed, aside from the Primordial spirits Ash and his companions generated themselves, most spirits obtained from the Inheritance could not be taken away. Whether it was because the Specter Seer was stingy with rewards or simply unwilling to see the inept benefit from the Inheritance, remained unclear.

The Temporary Spirit rewards included many that directly affected the sorcerer's soul, such as the Battle soul that grew stronger with each fight, the Sword soul that increased blade damage, the Malicious Soul that thrived on malevolence, and the Dark Soul that gained strength in dim light.

Among these was a spirit known as "Soul Refining," which could purge impurities from the soul, compressing its essence to make it more dense and substantial. But this alone was insufficient, as they couldn't possibly find four Soul Refining spirits. After three days of exploration and testing, Ash also chose the "Soulgarment" and "Sleepsoul" spirits.

The former was highly practical, forming a protective armor around the soul, with its defensive strength proportional to the soul's quality, perfectly complementing the Soul Refining spirit. The latter was a healing spirit, accelerating the recovery of soul damage through sleep.

Facing the faint purple smoke of Soul's Obsession, Ash had already employed Soul Refining. Despite the intense pain akin to being carved by an axe and chisel, his form had become leaner, yet his face and skin radiated a healthy glow, as if his originals had entered the Virtual Realm!

Then, the combination of Soulgarment and Sleepsoul!

Miracle: Sleep in Overcoats!

A light blue trench coat materialized around Ash, enveloping the sword Princess and the others. Sonya, Deya, and Vesser immediately felt their eyelids grow heavy, quickly leaning against Ash and falling into a deep sleep.

The faint purple smoke of Soul's Obsession circled them several times, but it had no effect on Ash and couldn't erode the souls of the sword Princess and her companions.

This was the solution Vesser had devised: the essence of Soul's Obsession was to draw out the target's soul and gradually wear it down. Besides having a soul dense enough to resist the pull, if the soul was first drawn by another Miracle, it could also withstand Soul's Obsession!

The Miracle of Sleep in Overcoats relied on Ash's fortified soul to forcibly draw in Vesser and the others' souls. Simply put, Ash "consumed" Vesser and the others first; as long as Soul's Obsession couldn't pry open Ash's "mouth," it couldn't affect Vesser and the others.

After five minutes, Ash, holding them close, began to feel a bit tired. Only then did the faint purple smoke gradually dissipate, revealing three reward light orbs in the hall.

Ash immediately dispelled the Sleep in Overcoats Miracle, and Vesser was the first to awaken. She took two steps back and exhaled softly, "Finally, we made it through."

"Didn't expect to succeed on the first try," Ash shared her joy.

In truth, Ash had already prepared the specter key, ready to exit the Virtual Realm if Sleep in Overcoats failed. After all, Soul's Obsession was a legendary spell, even a divine intervention, while their Sleep in Overcoats was merely a fledgling Miracle. Failure to break through was quite normal.

However, although it seemed they had cracked it effortlessly, it required finding the Soul Refining, Soulgarment, and Sleepsoul spirits from the rewards. Moreover, the Specter's Inheritance didn't allow the use of spellforce; Ash had to rely solely on his soul to drive these spirits and create the Miracle.

This was no laughing matter, as the Miracle wasn't simply a combination of two spirits. It involved integrating Sleepsoul's effects into Soulgarment and then using Soulgarment to

unleash Sleepsoul's power. If Ash's Soul Sect hadn't reached the silver realm, he wouldn't have been able to perform this Miracle at all.

That's why they delayed for three days before tackling the 34th level. During those days, they gathered soul experience from earlier levels, and once the sword Princess and the others' Soul Sect reached the silver realm, Ash naturally advanced to the silver realm through Experience Sharing. This way, even if they encountered unexpected challenges later, they would at least have some means of self-preservation.

As for why Ash was the one to perform Sleep in Overcoats, it was because he was the only one in the team who was still idle.

The sword Princess followed the Sword soul path, constantly enhancing her close combat abilities, and was usually the first to charge into battle during most combat levels.

Vesser took the 'Soul Master' route, using her expanded soul computation abilities to control multiple enemies, often shining when the enemy numbers exceeded double digits.

The Witch pursued the 'Servant soul,' 'Martial soul,' and 'Battle soul' paths. Although spirits couldn't be used in the Inheritance, her Fist-Claw Sect was genuinely at the Golden level, allowing her to assist and complement when the sword Princess dealt direct damage.

This is why they still insisted on tackling levels as a team of four-no matter what rewards the levels offered, they would at least suit one operator's path. A solo sorcerer faced with unsuitable rewards would have to choose randomly.

This situation left Ash in an awkward position. Despite mastering many Spellcasting Sects through Experience Sharing, his combat style was primarily long-range Swordsmanship. If he pursued the Sword soul path, he would not only compete for resources with the sword Princess but also exceed the necessary output.

It wasn't until he analyzed the combination of Soul Refining and Soulgarment that Ash determined his path in the Specter's Inheritance-Guardian.

Simply put, when enemies aimed to focus their attacks, he had to step up and take the hits.

Chapter 647: Rejuvenating Return

Half a minute had passed since the Sleep in Overcoats Miracle was undone, yet Ash noticed the two female sorcerers in his arms showed no signs of waking. He gently tapped their cheeks, urging them, "Wake up, it's time to get to work."

Sonya reluctantly opened her eyes, but seeing the Witch still pretending to sleep, she decided to keep her eyes shut and snuggle closer. They had been exploring the Specter's Inheritance for days, and the Underground Hall was so open that Sonya found no chance to develop a secret relationship with Ash. It had been days since she absorbed any Observer energy, and she was a bit distracted during sword practice. Naturally, she wanted to seize this opportunity to absorb more.

"Hey, Vesser is still here!"

“Oh, don’t mind me,” Vesser calmly replied. “I was just planning to thoroughly read the Specter Handbook again. I can manage at least 30 minutes, so take your time. Do you need me to wear earplugs?”

Deya, being the Empress, was ultimately a bit more reserved. Hearing Vesser’s words, she blushed and opened her eyes. But Sonya, with her thicker skin, continued to cling to Ash.

Amused by their antics, Ash ruffled the Witch’s hair and then wrapped his arms around the sword Princess’s waist. As a martial sorcerer, the sword Princess’s waist was surprisingly slender, which might affect her maximum power output, but Ash certainly didn’t mind. The embrace was filled with elasticity and felt wonderful, though Ash only held her lightly, whispering in her ear, “Satisfied now?”

Sonya opened her eyes, feigning disdain with a scoff, though she couldn’t hide the upward curve of her lips. Her ruby eyes glanced at Ash, her brows and eyes filled with a playful allure that was irresistibly enchanting.

Ash thought to himself that even if the Kaleidoscope could transform him into the sword Princess’s likeness, he could never capture even a tenth of her beauty.

However, Sonya quickly composed herself and said, “Vesser, sorry about that.”

Vesser understood, but witnessing affection right in front of her was another matter. Moreover, they were in the Specter’s Inheritance, where danger could arise at any moment. Now that Sonya had calmed down, she realized she had been a bit irrational.

“You don’t need to apologize,” Vesser said, closing the Specter Handbook casually. “I can understand.”

The rewards for the 34th level were “Soul Restoration,” “Temporary Spirit: Wandering Soul,” and “Moderate Soul Experience.” The first was generally not chosen, while the Wandering Soul spirit was a mobile spirit of the Soul Sect, enhancing movement speed and granting the ability to glide, suitable for both the sword Princess and the Witch.

After a brief discussion, they decided to let Vesser choose the “Moderate Soul Experience.”

From the “Soul Restoration” in the 34th level, it was clear that the further they progressed, the higher the Soul Sect Realm requirements of the Specter’s Inheritance became for sorcerers.

In fact, Soul’s Obsession didn’t necessarily require the Soul Refining spirit to overcome. If a sorcerer’s Soul Sect Realm was high enough, they could potentially use spirits like Battle soul, Sword soul, or Malicious Soul to modify their soul and counter Soul’s Obsession. For instance, the Sword soul spirit inherently had the effect of refining the soul to forge sharpness, but the sword Princess’s realm wasn’t high enough to deeply modify her own soul.

As the challenges ahead grew increasingly difficult, it became imperative to cultivate a soul sorcerer with a high realm. Without one, not only would passing the trials be impossible, but there was also a risk of perishing during the Inheritance Trial. Vesser, being a Truth sorcerer and proficient in over twenty types of spellcasting, was naturally the most suitable candidate for cultivation, especially since none of them had an apparent Soul Talent.

Upon reaching the 35th level, Ash and his companions couldn't help but feel a surge of anticipation. Every fifth and tenth level within the Specter's Inheritance offered considerably richer rewards, like the 'specter key' which only appeared at the twentieth level. However, the difficulty also escalated significantly, with the risk of severe soul damage if they weren't careful.

Suddenly, the walls of the hall were covered with whiteboards. Ash waited a few seconds without noticing any other movement, so he approached to take a closer look-this was the moment for the meat shield to shine.

As he neared the whiteboard, his Primordial spirit unexpectedly emerged, constructing a peculiar scene in his mind: on a sunny meadow, Igor was fishing by the shore wearing a fisherman's hat, Harvey opened a coffin to let Alice bask in the sun, Lise was running with a kite on the grass, Annan was pushing a stroller, with Little Banjeet inside curiously watching the kite. Ash had just finished pitching a tent, while the Little Sword Princess and Little Witch were downstream, barefoot and catching fish for fun. Vesser sat on a tree stump reading a book, and Raven was preparing skewers, beckoning everyone over...

So that's it, the 35th level's trial was to paint. Without any brushes provided, it was clear they had to use their souls to create the artwork, and whether they could pass depended on how well they painted.

But this was quite disadvantageous for Ash. Why did he have to paint so many characters? Surely the others wouldn't need to paint anything so complex!

Ash grumbled internally, and as he lowered his head, he noticed another anomaly-the ground seemed much closer than usual.

Wait a minute!

Ash looked at his two soft little hands and then at his completely shrunken body, finally realizing what had happened-he had turned into a child!

Are you kidding me? The Specter's Inheritance increased the difficulty by turning them into children? What a boring trial! Although his body had shrunk, his mind was still sharp!

Turning his head, Ash saw, as expected, the Little Sword Princess, Little Witch, and Vesser-all transformed into children!

The Little Sword Princess wore a puzzled expression, and Ash couldn't resist reaching out to pinch her cheek, giggling, "You're so cute like this-"

Smack!

Ash was punched and sent flying, and before he could get up, the Little Sword Princess was on top of him, pummeling his face with her tiny fists!

"What the heck!? I was wrong, I was wrong! You don't have to be so angry!"

Upon hearing his apology, the Little Sword Princess stopped, grabbing Ash by the collar and lifting his head, growling fiercely, “Dare to bully me again!?”

“Huh?” Ash was bewildered.

Smack!

The Little Sword Princess punched him again, her childish voice roaring, “Dare to!?”

“No, I don’t dare.” Though unsure of what was happening, Ash decided to go along with the Little Sword Princess’s words.

“Hmph!”

However, as the Little Sword Princess surveyed the surroundings, she once again grabbed Ash’s collar, glaring at him coldly, “Where is this place? Are you playing a prank on me!?”

“Wow!”

Little Weiser suddenly rubbed her eyes, wailing loudly, “Vionelle, Vionelle! Boohoo, where are you, Vionelle-“

At this moment, the Little Witch came over to pull the Little Sword Princess away, calmly advising, “It probably has nothing to do with him. The four of us might have encountered a special situation, like protagonists triggering an adventure in a fairy tale, which is why we’ve come to this place.”

Ash watched this scene in a daze.

He finally realized the true challenge of the 35th level.

In the Specter Handbook, the Specter Seer had mentioned seeing a mental sorcerer with a miracle that could revert someone to childhood, effective both offensively and therapeutically. However, he believed it was merely superficial, as a child’s soul structure differs from an adult’s. The greatest distinction between infants and adults is the plasticity of talent; if one could fully revert to childhood, it would mean developing new talents!

Yet, the Specter Seer who reached Ruby Mountain had not yet created a miracle that fully reverted one to childhood, merely naming this concept “Rejuvenating Return.”

Thus, not only had the Little Sword Princess and the others’ souls shrunk, but their memories and consciousness had also regressed to their childhood!

Chapter 648: No Escape

“So what you’re saying is, we’re actually close partners participating in the Inheritance Trial, but because of the Miracle ‘Rejuvenating Return,’ we’ve turned into children and temporarily lost our other memories?”

Thud!

Little Sword Princess delivered a swift uppercut to Ash’s stomach, and as he doubled over, she expertly hammered his back with her fists, knocking him flat. Once again, she sat triumphantly atop him-she really loved pinning people down during a fight.

“This is just like the plot from ‘Virtual Realm Rules Horror Story.’ You think I haven’t seen it? Still trying to fool me! Still trying to fool me! Dare you try to fool me again?!”

Ash was utterly defeated-how could the screenwriters from Stars Kingdom have such wild imaginations that they even stumbled upon this trope?

Kids should spend more time outside playing, instead of staying home watching TV dramas!

Little Witch led Little Weiser over, with the latter still rubbing her eyes and sniffing.

She held Sword Princess back, advising, “Don’t rush. He seems to be the only one who knows what’s going on, while we know nothing. Do you remember what you were doing before you came here?”

“I...” Little Sword Princess clutched her small head, thinking hard for a while, but eventually shook her head, cautiously saying to Little Witch, “I can’t remember, but I should’ve been in town... I’ve never left the town.”

“I can’t remember either.”

Little Witch squatted beside Ash, looking down at him, “He should know something, but he might be deceiving us.”

“Why would I deceive you?” Ash couldn’t believe he couldn’t even gain the trust of the Witch, “Do I look like someone who lies?”

“You do!” Little Witch pinched Ash’s cheek, “In fairy tales, boys as handsome as you are usually the villains!”

“...” Ash: “Isn’t it usually the pretty girls who are the villains?”

“Pretty girls can be wicked sorceresses or kind princesses, but handsome boys are either evil princes coveting the princess’s beauty or scheming evil sorcerers!”

“Wait, in the fairy tales you read, what identity do the good protagonists usually have?”

“Princesses and the loyal knights who protect them.”

“Can’t knights be handsome?”

“Knights should be scarred, resolute, brave, and strong!” Little Witch tugged at Ash’s face, “With you looking so vain and being pinned down by a girl, you definitely aren’t a knight!”

Ash never imagined that the Witch’s childhood aesthetic would be so macho, nor did he expect that his inability to fit her aesthetic after shrinking would prevent him from gaining her trust!

He was momentarily at a loss with these three little rascals, “I’m the only one who knows the truth, but none of you are willing to believe me, so whatever I say is useless.”

Little Sword Princess raised her fist, threatening Ash fiercely, “If I beat you up a few more times, you definitely won’t dare lie again!”

“Let’s not hit him yet,” Little Witch said, “Even though he doesn’t look like a good person, he might be our companion, perhaps a follower, or maybe an evil sorcerer we’ve hired. For a great cause, good people might cooperate with bad ones.”

Little Sword Princess found it quite reasonable and looked at Little Witch with admiration, “You’re amazing! By the way, what are your names?”

“I,” Little Weiser sniffed back her snot bubble and timidly raised her hand, “I’m Yolán Vesser.”

“Wait a minute,” Little Witch suddenly interrupted, “We’ve come to such a strange place, it’s best not to reveal our real names.”

“Oh!” Little Sword Princess immediately felt a bit uneasy, “Sorry, I didn’t think of that... But he said he knows us, so he must know our names too.” She poked Ash’s cheek.

“Right,” Little Witch turned to Ash, “You said you know us, so tell us, what are our names?”

Ash blinked and said, “Actually, we only use code names to refer to each other, never our real names. I’m called Observer, you’re Witch, and she’s Sword Princess.”

“What about her?” Little Witch pulled Little Weiser closer.

“Her... her code name is Yolán Vesser,” Ash suddenly realized something was off and emphasized, “She’s the only one among us who uses her real name, really!”

However, the skeptical looks in Little Sword Princess and Little Witch's eyes were evident-Little Weiser had just voluntarily revealed her name, so her code name is her real name? And for those of us who haven't said our real names, you only know our code names?

This is too much of a coincidence, even a six-year-old can see there's something fishy!

Seeing Little Sword Princess about to resort to violence again, Little Witch quickly stopped her and asked Ash, "Regardless of whether we're companions or not, what should we do to leave here?"

"Draw," Ash pointed to the walls, "You just need to approach those whiteboards, and the spirit will tell you what to draw. Once you create those images, we can clear the level and leave."

Little Witch pondered for a few seconds, gestured for Little Sword Princess to keep Ash subdued, then approached a wall and returned with a look of amazement, "There's indeed a spirit telling me what to draw, and we don't need brushes; we can use our fingers."

"Anyway, it shouldn't hurt to follow along, so let's trust him for now."

Faced with Little Witch's instructions, not only did Little Sword Princess have no objections, but even Little Weiser wiped her tears and nodded timidly like a chick pecking at rice.

If Ash hadn't seen it with his own eyes, he wouldn't have believed that the usually lazy and adorable Witch could possess such outstanding leadership and charisma, while the calm and knowledgeable Vesser had turned into a crying echo, and the socially adept Sword Princess reverted to childhood, becoming so sensitive that she only used violence to protect herself.

At this moment, Ash finally realized the terrifying nature of the 35th challenge.

Unlike the Amnesia Cabin, where everyone lost their memories but retained adult thinking, allowing for calm discussion and cooperation driven by survival instincts, Rejuvenating Return was different. They not only lost their memories but their thinking abilities reverted to childhood!

If a sorcerer was a timid crybaby as a child, or too scared to explore the environment, in this state, they wouldn't be able to calmly face the challenge and might even forget they have the specter key to escape the Inheritance!

This level probably has a time limit, and Ash doesn't believe that the Evil Sorcerer known as the Specter Seer would be kind enough to simply kick out unqualified challengers. It's likely similar to the Soul's Obsession in level 34, where challengers who exceed the time limit face continuous soul erosion. If they don't wake up before their souls are completely eroded, then they might as well be dead.

Ash can fully understand the Specter Seer's mindset: leaving behind this Inheritance means he has already fallen. Since he himself is dead, why would he care about the life or death of future sorcerers? Not only wouldn't he care, he might even wish to kill more people!

Over a long time scale, the relationship between sorcerers is “cooperative development,” because all sorcerers’ achievements and explorations accumulate into the knowledge Inheritance of the Virtual Realm. The higher the sorcerers’ power and the greater their numbers, the better the sorcerer world develops.

But over a century-long time scale, the relationship between sorcerers is undoubtedly “competitive interests!” The higher the power, the more competitive it becomes!

Take the Senlo wasteland, for example. Before the emergence of the Four Pillars Cult, the wasteland’s three strongest cults were those with legendary sorcerers! If the wasteland had only one legendary sorcerer, his cult could easily flatten half of Senlo!

Even though the Virtual Realm is important, sorcerers ultimately have to compete in reality!

Moreover, through the feeding issues of the three-winged spirit, Ash vaguely realizes that to support a four-winged spirit, a legendary sorcerer might indeed need to rely on organizational power to achieve it.

Interestingly, the Lake Handbook, Time Handbook, and Specter Handbook all mention that feeding spirits was quite troublesome back then. Different spirits required different food materials, and if the corresponding food wasn’t found, the spirit could starve to death. However, feeding in this manner allowed for longer intervals between feedings, not requiring daily nourishment.

The Round Cicada is a prime example; it only needs to drink the Golden Flow Water produced by all things in the world, requiring no additional feeding.

Modern sorcerers generally feed spirits with gold and silver coins, which, while simple and convenient, require almost daily feeding. Moreover, three-winged and four-winged spirits have an extremely high demand for gold coins, truly living up to their name as gold-devouring beasts.

Clearly, in the era of the three Angels, spirits couldn't be fed with gold and silver, nor did they view gold and silver as wealth. Previously, Ash might have just brushed past this notion, but knowing about the Blank Concept, he couldn't help but wonder-could there be a Blank Concept engraved with the idea that "spirits can be fed with gold and silver"?

Regardless of ancient or modern times, legendary sorcerers inevitably need organizational power to gather resources to support spirits, and involving organizational power inevitably concerns the distribution of power!

If the Specter Seer kills more sanctuary sorcerers in the Inheritance, his successor will face less difficulty in reality; if he kills a genius in the Inheritance, his successor will face less challenge in the future!

Even the reward "specter key" that inevitably appears in level 20 might be a trap. If a sorcerer believes they can exit the Inheritance at any time with the specter key, they might boldly challenge the levels, only to meet a sudden demise in Soul's Obsession and Rejuvenating Return!

It's more likely that he simply doesn't want the younger sorcerers to have an easy time, aiming to trap and eliminate sanctuary sorcerers whenever possible!

The Inheritance only showcases the Specter Seer's deep research into the Soul Sect, but this cunning strategy of taking before giving truly befits his title as a seer!

Little Sword Princess climbed off him, and once Ash stood up, she suddenly reached out towards his face. Ash instinctively leaned back, thinking the little tigress was about to throw another tantrum.

However, Little Sword Princess merely placed her hand on his face and asked, "You're not lying to us, are you?"

"Of course not," Ash replied with a smile. "Because you're so smart, you'd catch me if I lied. I wouldn't dare lie to you."

Little Sword Princess lowered her head in silence for a moment, then gently touched his face and leaned in to blow on his cheek.

"Pain, pain, go away~"

Then she stood with her hands on her hips, proudly puffed out her little chest, her cheeks flushed, and huffed, "If I find out you're playing tricks on me, I'll catch you and then..."

"I'll end up being pinned down and beaten by you," Ash surrendered with raised hands. "Don't worry, I won't escape."

Ash turned to start working on his ‘masterpiece,’ when his sleeve was tugged.

“What’s up?”

Little Sword Princess held onto his sleeve, her lips moved slightly, her expression extremely uneasy, and she whispered a few words. Ash didn’t catch them, so he leaned closer and asked, “What did you say?”

“I can’t...” Little Sword Princess glanced at Little Witch and Little Weiser, and whispered like a mosquito, “I can’t draw.”

Ash understood. “Why don’t you ask them to teach you?”

“They...” Little Sword Princess grumbled, “They seem...”

She didn’t finish her sentence and instead put on a fierce front, demanding, “Are you going to teach me or not?”

Ash thought for a moment. “I can teach you, but you need to ask me properly, with the right attitude.”

Despite being pummeled by Little Sword Princess earlier, Ash wasn't one to hold grudges. He made this request to temper her spirit a bit, making it easier to teach her drawing later. To get a child to learn properly, you first need to establish authority so they listen, a teaching tactic Ash had used with his little nephew.

However, Little Sword Princess's expression turned very sour, and she tossed a remark over her shoulder as she walked away, "If you won't teach, forget it!"

She didn't seek help from anyone else and went straight to her own whiteboard. She raised her finger, stared at the board for a long time, but still didn't dare to start drawing.

She sneaked a glance at Ash, saw he was still watching her, and quickly turned her head back, pretending nothing had happened.

It's hard to imagine how this stubborn and sensitive little girl grew up to be such a social butterfly... Ash scratched his head, helplessly walking over.

It seems he really can't escape.

Chapter 649: Are You a Bewitcher?

Ash could choose to leave the Inheritance at any moment. The specter key was with him. But even if he escaped this time, he would face this challenge again later. Ash suspected that his ability to retain memories was largely due to using Soul Refining to strengthen his spirit, allowing him to barely resist the effects of the Rejuvenating Return.

The Rejuvenating Return was subtle and silent, and Sleep in Overcoats might not work again. This challenge required them to create their own artwork, so the Little Sword Princess and the others needed to be fully conscious, not perpetually in the Sleep in Overcoats state.

In other words, if they wanted all four of them to retain their memories and pass the challenge, they would need to develop a new soul miracle. It might take a few days, or perhaps weeks.

However, the problem was that the 35th challenge wasn't the final one. According to their guesses, the Specter's Inheritance likely had 100 challenges! If they stopped at every difficult challenge to spend days creating a new miracle, they would surely miss out on the Specter's Inheritance and the Blank Concept! The Virtual Realm was open to all sorcerers, and even though elves were rare now, there were still those with exceptional Soul Talent among the elf sanctuaries.

Not to mention, among the people Ash knew, Qenna's progress was undoubtedly faster than theirs! This elf matriarch was a genuine soul sanctuary, with a sanctuary level in the Soul Sect realm, and she had the Gospel system to help her analyze challenges. She had probably already surpassed the first 50 challenges!

If they truly wanted to seize the Specter's Inheritance, they couldn't retreat in fear at challenges like the 35th one, which they could barely overcome. They had to break through with determination! This was a consensus among the four of them.

Since Ash could lead them out at any time, they would continue to challenge until they encountered real danger before giving up!

Ash stood beside the Little Sword Princess and asked, “What are you going to draw?”

“Two people!” The Little Sword Princess held up two fingers, her eyes filled with longing. “The woman has beautiful red hair like silk and bright red eyes, wearing a gorgeous wedding dress. The man is in a handsome suit, tall, handsome, cold, and proud. They’re embracing each other, looking like they’re about to kiss!”

Her excitement grew as she spoke, clearly influenced by the TV dramas she had seen. But Ash scratched his head, wondering if the Little Sword Princess had misunderstood, or if the sword Princess originals had some misconception about him.

“Why don’t you start with the face? Just trace the outline, then draw the clothes and the wedding dress.”

The Little Sword Princess nodded obediently, extending her finger to draw while asking, “Hey, why am I drawing these two people? They look like stars from a TV drama promo.”

Didn’t she recognize them? Ash blinked and said, “Don’t you think the beautiful girl you’re drawing is what you’ll look like when you grow up? With red hair and red eyes...”

“Impossible!” The Little Sword Princess shook her head. “How could I possibly look that good when I grow up? I look so plain.”

Ash was about to say, “You’re already adorable,” but then he realized something-when the Sword Princess was young, she wasn’t exactly a beauty. He had seen her childhood appearance in the Amnesia Cabin: frail body, dull hair, and undeveloped features.

He quickly understood the situation.

Rejuvenating Return didn’t actually revert them to their childhood; it merely compressed their souls to a child’s level and blocked their memories after childhood. Thus, their current appearance was just a childlike version of their adult selves. For instance, Little Witch and Little Weiser looked more childlike, but their overall features hadn’t changed at all.

That was impossible. As children grow, their skulls and features change significantly. There’s an old saying, “Kids grow so fast I can’t recognize them,” which means that if adults turn back into children, it’s normal not to recognize them!

So in Little Sword Princess’s mind, she still saw herself as that plain, frail village girl, unable to imagine becoming confident and beautiful in the future.

However, Ash still said, “You’re actually quite adorable now.”

Little Sword Princess raised her right fist again, but Ash caught it, saying, “I’m not talking about your looks. I think your personality is adorable.”

She raised her left fist, “You’re mocking me. You think I can’t tell?”

“Exactly, that’s what’s so cute about you,” Ash said earnestly. “Even though you’re a bit too sensitive, no matter how much malice you face, you always fight back. Even if you weren’t pretty as a child, would you give up when you grow up?”

“By the way, I remember you like Delarose. I’ve never met her, but she must be quite beautiful. Don’t you want to grow up and be as dazzling and pretty as Delarose? With that wish, how could you not be beautiful in the future?”

Little Sword Princess blinked at him, then slowly lowered her fist, whispering, “You actually know I want to be as pretty as Delarose. I never told anyone that... so you’re not lying to me?”

So revealing this information could gain her trust... Ash nodded, “Really, and the red-haired girl you’re drawing is what you’ll look like when you grow up.”

Though still a bit skeptical, she didn’t dwell on it and instead asked, “How do you know I like Delarose? Are we close?”

“A bit closer than friends,” Ash could only reply.

She asked, “If the woman I’m drawing is me, then who is the man holding her?”

Ash and she stared at each other for a while before he said, “I can’t see who it is. I’ll only know once you draw it. But...”

“Do you think that man looks like me?”

Little Sword Princess paused, then her lips moved slightly, and she suddenly punched Ash, knocking him down.

“You’re teasing me again!”

Ash had to admire the power of Soul Refining; despite taking so many hits, he was unharmed. He got up and said, “Start with the facial outline, then the clothing outline. Draw the big shapes first, then the small ones, and gradually refine the details... Can you do it?”

“I can.”

Ash glanced at Little Witch and Little Weiser, noticing they hadn’t started drawing either, so he decided to check on them. But just as he took a couple of steps, Little Sword Princess grabbed him.

“Where are you going?”

“To teach them how to draw,” Ash replied. “This test requires everyone’s effort to pass.”

Little Sword Princess’s face showed clear dissatisfaction. She hesitated for a moment, then lowered her head and said, “I’m sorry, I won’t hit you anymore.”

“It’s okay,” Ash certainly wouldn’t hold a grudge against a child with amnesia. “It’s the test’s fault, you were just responding in your own way.”

“Could you not go?” Little Sword Princess’s voice was tense with a hint of hope.

Ash paused.

He realized Little Sword Princess’s reliance on him was quite natural. After all, he had gained her trust, and his confident demeanor made it only logical for her to depend on him in her reverted childhood state. But this inexplicable possessiveness was odd, and there was a hint of insecurity...

Ash suddenly recalled how Little Sword Princess had been cautious and even somewhat humble when facing Little Witch earlier. Initially, he thought it was due to Little Witch’s leadership skills, but on second thought, it might also stem from Little Sword Princess’s inferiority complex.

Seeing Little Witch being so cute and pretty, she instinctively felt inferior, especially with Little Witch's calm demeanor. It made her feel even more inadequate, and only by asserting her strength over Ash could she ease her self-doubt.

She hadn't asked Little Witch and Little Weiser for help with drawing for the same reason. Pretty little girls could draw, but she couldn't, which made her feel embarrassed, so she only dared to ask the one person she felt she could bully.

Now, she was afraid Ash would leave her to help them, so she didn't want him to go.

The world of children is so straightforward and simple.

So Ash said, "I'll teach them and then come back to teach you a second time. Only you get a second chance, how about that?"

"You won't lie to me, will you?"

"I won't."

"Alright."

Little Sword Princess let go of his hand and obediently started drawing on the whiteboard.

Having settled one, Ash went over to Little Witch and asked, “Are you facing any difficulties?”

Little Witch glanced at him and said, “I have to draw a lot of people, and I hardly know any of them.”

Ash thought that if he hadn’t retained his memory, he’d be just as confused about what he was supposed to draw. Who is this blond man, who is the dark-skinned man sitting on the coffin, why are the crows at a barbecue... Such questions would certainly entangle him.

“Are your sisters not around?” Ash asked.

Witch: “What sisters?”

Rejuvenating Return has some real magic, suppressing even the Witch’s sister personalities. But it’s not surprising since the sister personalities are latent aspects of the soul, so they’re affected too.

This is much better than in the Amnesia Cabin, where the Witch was nearly driven mad by her sisters. But perhaps because the sisters were temporarily suppressed, the Witch, though still with black hair, now had a few strands of pure-colored hair.

Clearly, the Witch wasn't her childhood self either, just a softened version of her adult self.

"You can start with the simpler ones," Ash suggested. "This test might have a time limit, so you need to finish quickly."

Little Witch nodded, then suddenly said, "In my drawing, I see someone who looks a lot like you."

"If you're right, and we've only temporarily reverted to childhood, then that person is probably the real you."

Ash nodded. "That's right, it's me."

Little Witch continued, "But in this drawing, there are four beautiful girls with different temperaments but similar appearances. They all, through their gazes or actions, show their affection for you, and even I can see it."

"In a picture book, I saw a magical creature called a Bewitcher, which everyone likes."

Little Witch looked at Ash curiously and asked:

“Are You a Bewitcher?”

Chapter 650: The Wishing Pool

At the same time, Ruby Mountain.

This mountain, washed by the Golden Flow Water for countless years, has never lost its luster. Now, its peak seems to be draped in a dreamy layer of milky white glaze. The milky glaze covers the crimson crystals beneath, transitioning from dense at the summit to sparse at the base, resembling a creative dessert from afar-strawberry and milk flavored.

But upon closer inspection, the milky glaze is merely a thin layer of luminescence clinging to the ground. Yet, this very luminescence causes legendary sorcerers attempting to climb to either weep with joy, dance in ecstasy, be overwhelmed with sorrow, or burn with rage!

On the mountainside, the Mercury Trojan Horse crawls slowly on all fours.

She had barely advanced a few steps when her body began to tremble as if electrified, overwhelmed by intense emotions of maternal love, joy, and anticipation. She seemed to see herself cradling a newborn, ugly yet endearing, filled with happiness that this child had come into the world, sincerely hoping for the child's joyful growth-

Tactile Secret Technique: Trojan Horse Tower!

Her soul rippled with a mercury hue, and gradually, her emotions subsided until rationality regained control. Meanwhile, in reality, at least ten thousand female followers of the Four Pillars Cult suddenly felt a surge of maternal love, desperately seeking something cute to soothe their inner yearning.

The Mercury Trojan Horse's form stabilized, and she continued her ascent of Ruby Mountain. Even without knowing the progress of others, she was certain she was in the lead, possibly even the fastest among them!

The Mercury Trojan Horse was not a legendary sorcerer herself; she was currently occupying the soul of 'Pope of Annihilation' Oreyva Frenzy Battle, the legendary sorcerer of the War Temple. She typically wouldn't interfere with her subordinates' virtual realm exploration, but when it came to the Divine Lord Inheritance, she had to take matters into her own hands.

If the Divine Lord Inheritance proved too challenging, she might have given up, but the virtual realm's four inheritances this time included the Lord of Wishflux's, which was the easiest for her!

Compared to other Angelic Heritages, the Lord of Wishflux's test was straightforward and simple-not complicated at all. The task was merely to climb to the summit and seize the 'Heart of Wishes' left by Him to inherit His Divine Kingdom.

To facilitate this, He temporarily suppressed Ruby Mountain's 'infinite extension' characteristic. During the inheritance period, Ruby Mountain wouldn't stretch endlessly as before. If one was willing to walk, theoretically, it would take just two hours to reach the summit!

And the test He set was this layer of milky white luminescence covering the upper region of Ruby Mountain.

Initially, the sorcerers were unsure of its nature, but as they climbed and broke through, information about this luminescence gradually seeped into their consciousness.

These luminescent rays originated from the Celestium of the Lord of Wishflux, a projection of a secret domain known as the 'Wishing Pool'!

The sorcerers hadn't heard of the Wishing Pool before, yet it was akin to the Golden Flow, Great Road, and Fate Questioning-World Secret Domains capable of bridging reality and the Virtual Realm. Within it, countless wishes from intelligent creatures had accumulated over millennia, each sincere wish transforming into a light point stored in the Wishing Pool. Over the years, the Wishing Pool had become a sea of light.

The layer of faint light now covering Ruby Mountain is not even a fraction of the Wishing Pool's full power.

When sorcerers come into contact with the Benediction, they are overwhelmed by the wishes contained within. At best, their will becomes muddled, preventing further progress; at worst, their personalities undergo drastic changes, adopting others' wishes as their own.

Theoretically, the Benediction is merely an attack from the Mental Sect, and legendary sorcerers generally have means to resist such mental assaults, allowing them to pass through the Benediction with ease.

However, whether due to a divine intervention by the Lord of Wishflux or a qualitative change from the sheer volume of the Wishing Pool, the Benediction now contains elements of the Fate Sect. Even if sorcerers can resist the mental impact, they cannot avoid the fate contamination within!

The Fate Sect is one of the most enigmatic branches of spellcasting, and most legendary sorcerers have neither seen nor defended against it. How could they possibly withstand the Miracle of Fate left by the Lord of Wishflux?

Yet, this only intensifies the legendary sorcerers' desire for the Divine Lord Inheritance. If they previously didn't understand the value of obtaining the Celestium, the Wishing Pool now presents an irresistible temptation-it's a World Secret Domain capable of unraveling the mysteries of fate!

Securing the Wishing Pool would not only allow them to cultivate in the Fate Sect, but it might also autonomously generate fate spirits, much like the Golden Flow!

Unlike other legendary sorcerers who must endure the Benediction head-on, the Mercury Trojan Horse has a way to mitigate its contaminating impact!

Her Tactile Secret Technique, the Trojan Horse Tower, doesn't merely control others; it connects all souls into a single entity, allowing her to navigate freely among them. While she is powerless against physical harm to her avatar and can only retreat, the Benediction targets the soul. Through the Trojan Horse Tower, she can distribute the contamination among thousands or even millions!

However, this technique is like a champagne tower-only when the top glass overflows can it spill over to the others. Thus, only when Oreyva's soul can no longer bear it will the contamination be shared with others through the Trojan Horse Tower.

Even so, the Mercury Trojan Horse finds it much easier than other legendary sorcerers. Only when the Benediction's concentration is enough to instantly shatter Oreyva's soul will she be unable to continue her ascent.

She estimates that she needs to hone her Fate Sect abilities to at least the Golden level to reach the summit and seize the Heart of Wishes.

But with the help of her Tactile Secret Technique, she should be able to climb to the top by elevating her Fate Sect skills to the silver level!

As for fate talent, Oreyva might lack it, but the Mercury Trojan Horse is a prophecy sorcerer!

Fate, prophecy, and Truth are three intertwined mystical arts, and in terms of fate talent, only a Truth sorcerer might surpass her!

The Mercury Trojan Horse looked up at the shimmering Heart of Wishes atop Ruby Mountain.

Interestingly, since the Divine Lord Inheritance began, the angelic apparition that usually appears at the summit has vanished, much to the disappointment of many legendary sorcerers. They all know the legend: once you manifest colorless virtual wings, finding the angel at the mountain's peak will open up an even greater challenge.

If they could obtain the Divine Lord Inheritance and transcend the mortal-divine boundary to become a Demigod, it would be the ultimate achievement.

However, the Mercury Trojan Horse wasn't concerned about that. She was solely focused on obtaining the Celestium of the Lord of Wishflux and the Blank Concept.

As long as she couldn't capture Ash and Silver Lantern, she felt insecure. Every day was filled with anxiety, fearing that she might lose her Tactile Sense throne at any moment, that the Four Pillars Cult would fall into Ash or Silver Lantern's hands, forcing her into a desperate escape... not to mention the Raven that was constantly watching her...

If she could secure the Celestium, she would have a fallback! And if she acquired the Blank Concept, she could advance even further!

"Ash, Silver Lantern, the Four Pillars....," Mercury Trojan Horse muttered as she ascended past the Benediction. "I won't always be a powerless weakling... never!"

“Are You a Bewitcher?” the Little Witch asked curiously.

Ash was certain that if Igor were present, he would mercilessly mock him-“Haha, Ash, even you have a day when you’re mistaken for a Bewitcher!”

“No,” Ash replied. “I honestly don’t know why they like me...”

“Oh, there it is, the classic Bewitcher line, ‘I don’t know why they like me!’ And with such an innocent tone!” the Little Witch exclaimed, pointing at Ash in shock.

But soon she giggled, patting Ash on the shoulder, “I’m just joking. I know Bewitchers are only female; there’s never been a male Bewitcher in fairy tales.”

Ash blinked, thinking the Little Witch had quite the whimsical personality.

“But why, in the painting I have to draw, are there you and four sisters you’re in love with?” the Little Witch tilted her head, “Do you have anything to do with me?”

Ash recalled the Little Sword Princess’s earlier demeanor and, after a moment of hesitation, said, “Can I not say? It doesn’t really relate to your painting.”

“Then let me guess,” the Little Witch paused, “You’re actually my son, and those four sisters are my daughters-in-law?”

Ash was taken aback, “Why would I be your son?”

“Because I feel a sense of familiarity with you, like family, but you’re not my sibling. If what you said is true, and my memory is blocked, then the most likely scenario is that you’re my son, right?” the Little Witch reasoned.

“Why don’t you guess I’m your Dad?”

“...Because I don’t seem to have four moms?”

Watching TV dramas makes kids violent, reading fairy tales makes them imaginative... Ash shook his head, thinking that the Sword Princess and the Witch were just exceptions, not the fault of TV dramas or fairy tales.

But the Little Witch seemed in good spirits, so Ash reached out and ruffled her hair, “Be good, finish the painting, and we can leave.”

The Little Witch squinted slightly, tiptoeing closer, “A little longer.”

“Will you paint after that?”

“Yes.”

Suddenly, there was a stomping sound from next door. Ash looked over and saw the Little Sword Princess stomping her foot. When Ash looked her way, she immediately stopped and looked at the whiteboard, only glancing at them sideways. Her cute little gestures made Ash chuckle to himself.

At that moment, the Little Witch suddenly said, “Actually, those four sisters are me, aren’t they?”